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# THE KORYAK.

## INTRODUCTORY.

128 IN the winter of 1900-01 I carried on ethnological studies among the Koryak, my work being part of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition. The present publication contains the results of my inquiries. In working up my collections, I have treated religion and the myths first for the following reasons. When I returned from my field-work to New York, I found my friend, Mr. W. G. Bogoras, who had taken part in the Siberian Expedition, at work on the material culture of the Chukchee, whom he had studied for several years.

The Chukchee are related to the Koryak, and the conditions of life among these two tribes are very much alike. To avoid unnecessary repetition, it seemed desirable to defer the detailed description of the material culture of the Koryak until after the completion of Mr. Bogoras's work, and to restrict my description to features in regard to which the Koryak differ from the Chukchee. There is also a considerable similarity in the religion and mythology of both tribes, who are not only in the same stage of development of religious thought, but, with few exceptions, believe in the same supernatural powers, have the same kinds of festivals, religious ceremonies, and sacrifices, and possess similar myths. Since a considerable number of myths and some material relating to the beliefs of the Chukchee have been published by Mr. Bogoras,[1] I have been able to treat from a comparative point of view the beliefs and myths of the Koryak.

121 It may be in place to point out here that the material relating to the Koryak was gathered by me among the Maritime Koryak along the bays of Penshina and Gishiga on the Sea of Okhotsk, and among the Reindeer Koryak of the peninsula of Taigonos, and throughout the interior of the Gishiga district. I did not visit the Koryak of northern Kamchatka and of the coast of the Pacific Ocean, since I had only one winter at my disposal to make a study of this tribe, with which I first came in contact on the Jesup Expedition.

Since I had to leave the Koryak country in the latter half of the summer of 1901 to visit the Kolyma River, I thought it best in the winter of 1900-01

[1] See list of authorities quoted, p. 3.

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horses, of the Thessalian tribe; and with the being, half man and half ass, called "Kitovras" (Китоврасъ), in the Slav myths. In all of these creations of imagination there appears the same fundamental idea of combining the faculties of man and animal in one mythical being, whose powers are the combined powers of man and animal. This being may be, for instance, a good shot, and at the same time fleet of foot. It seems likely that, for this reason, these complex beings have the upper parts of their bodies human and the lower parts like those of animals.[1] In one Yukaghir tale recorded by me on the Jesup Expedition, the son of a man who cohabited with a bitch was half dog. His upper half was human. When he grew up, he became a remarkable hunter. No animal could escape him. His sight was keen, his arrows never missed their aim, and he was so fleet of foot that he could catch up with any animal. He was, however, troubled by a lack of co-ordination between his canine qualities and his human faculties. The dog's feet ran independently, and the human half frequently had to call to the feet to moderate their pace. Therein lay his peril. Once his dog-feet ran in the woods so fast that he was unable to stop them in time; and he ran into a sharp branch of a tree, which caused his death.

It may be fully granted that the fundamental idea of such combined beings could originate quite independently in different parts of the world; and episodes like the tales of men-dogs may thus be considered as original elements of the Pacific cycle of myths, and not as borrowed from the Old World.

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In concluding my review of the Koryak folk-lore, I deem it necessary to state, that I regard the identity of the Koryak folk-lore with that of North America as established. I look upon the comparative part of my review, however, as merely a weak attempt in this field. An insufficient acquaintance on my part with many works on the folk-lore of other tribes, and lack of time to make use of the largest possible number of sources relating to myths of the New and Old Worlds, have made it impossible for me to furnish a more substantial basis for the comparative part of my work.

I hope to continue the comparative study of American and Asiatic mythologies in working up the Yukaghir mythological material.

[1] It is interesting to note that in one of Boas's Athapascan tales (Traditions of the Ts'ets'a'ut, Journal of American Folk-Lore, Vol. X, 1897, p. 44) cannibals are pictured with "faces which look almost like those of a dog." In this case, the dog-face is ascribed to the cannibal, because he has a keen sense of smell, like a dog, — a faculty which he requires in order to scent human beings. In the stories of all nations we find the stereotyped expression of cannibals, "I smell a man or human flesh." (See pp. 134, 303.)